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A  
M E M O I R E  
ON  
SOME QUESTIONS  
RESPECTING THE  
PROJECTED UNION  
OF  
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

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*Sed mea me fata et tristia oracula Divum  
His merfere malis.*

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MEMOIRE, &c.

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DUBLIN, DECEMBER 5, 1798.

OUR dissensions and our calamities have called forth the project of a new, and, it is hoped, a final arrangement in the politics of this island. It is proposed to augment the energy of the empire, by simplifying its Constitution, and to tranquilise Ireland by removing a great domestic cause of irritation.

An Union, considered in the abstract, does not strike me with that assemblage of horrors, which some persons appear to feel. The conditions of the contract must render the measure salutary or pernicious. It seems a question merely of terms, for I cannot admit the existence of a separate legislature to be so essential to Ireland, and so much an integral part of the public welfare, as to render a treaty, for consolidating the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland, at all events inadmissible.

I have no grounds to form a conjecture that the liberties of the Irish people may not be as secure under the superintendence of an imperial, as of a domestic legislature. Few men have ever been invested with power who did not feel a disposition to exceed the limits regularly prescribed. As a corrective of this evil tendency, we have recourse to the establishment of our parliamentary tribunals, appointed in a good measure by the people, but acting wholly under the controul of public opinion. All the powers of the nation are a fiduciary deposit in the hands of these councils, and of their co-estate the crown, to be exercised for the nation's advantage. Such is the legislative function; it is equally their duty to revise the conduct of those persons who administer the executive authority, and to superintend the distribution of justice.— Here is the principle, but to what extent shall it be applied? a single institution of controul may be productive of essential service, and yet two, as well as twenty, may be excessive, inconvenient and dangerous. By the liberties of the people, I understand the confidence which every man ought to feel, that he may safely and freely do every act, which is not forbidden by laws enacted for the welfare of the community; and that he cannot be molested in his person or possessions, unless he offend against those established principles. Foremost in the catalogue stand the trial by jury, the



the common law and statute right of *habeas corpus*, the administration of civil and criminal justice by regulations of law, positive, notorious and invariable. The guarantee of these rights is the first object of civil society. This is the end ; Peers and Representatives are but the means. But again : what reason is there to suppose that the supreme tribunals of the Union may not be as open to complaint, and as vigilant in redress, as anxious to prevent injustice, and to avoid imposing an hardship, as our Irish parliament ?

To many it would be highly pleasing to erect an independent Government on every ten square miles of Europe. We might rehearse the advantages which the inhabitants were to derive from such organization ; and surely the passions arising from local attachment would not fail to be highly gratified. But then how many avenues would be thrown open for faction ? What disunions among the people ! What feebleness, what distraction in the public councils ! What a feverish existence for the subjects, where the passions and prejudices of individuals are so close at hand, as to be felt in every operation of Government ! Such states would be incapable of vigorous enterprise or effectual combination for resistance. They must fall beneath the first powerful adversary. But  
whilst

whilst casual circumstances retarded the inevitable doom, the miserable people would be the prey of mischiefs, from which no degree of ability could protect them; teased by dissensions, factions and discontents, and fluctuating, discordant, inoperative administrations,

Let me not be considered fanciful in the position I am about to lay down, that the arguments addressed to our national pride may exactly be inverted. The appearance of paradox will vanish, when we consider how much more real importance Ireland will derive, when by the share in the general representation, which she is entitled to obtain, she will be enabled to influence in some respect the councils of the empire, than at present whilst she receives laws from the more powerful member of the confederacy; and from that quarter must she ever receive laws, whilst she adheres with unreflecting pride to this languid and ambiguous independence.

I have been led so far into the investigation of a subject collateral to my original undertaking. The range of enquiry which opens from it is immense. If it were even ripe for discussion, I have traced to myself a more limited duty. But as to the general question of the Union of our legislature



ture with that of the empire, it seems to me to stand upon the terms which shall be proposed, and upon national expediency; and the rule of expediency again resolves into these two propositions: 1st, The circumstances of Europe and the state of Ireland render it the essential interest of Ireland to be closely combined with Britain; and 2d, an incorporation of all the powers of the two states, executive and legislative, is the most permanent and eligible form of connection. I do apprehend that, in the actual circumstances of Europe, every motive, by which man, in a state of nature, is induced to abridge his native rights, and associate for mutual security with his neighbour, does urge Ireland to cling to the sister island, and cultivate the connection with every reasonable assiduity. Suppose France should intrigue herself into an establishment in this country. When she had extinguished the funds on which depend our national securities, and divided the lands among her adventurers and partisans; when she had harassed our commerce by exactions, and our population by military requisitions, what a blessed consolation would remain in the legislative independence of Ireland! But when we do not perceive that any particular advantage is in jeopardy, we are disposed to consider it, as confirmed beyond all hazard, and that the establishment

blissment of another object for which we contend, cannot interfere with the former. On political matters you cannot reason forward in a direct line; you must often subtract when you would expect to add, and divide where you have hoped to multiply.

But people talk of the National Debt of Britain; and what then? I contend for it, that though, not legally, we are at this hour effectively pledged to support, with our resources, the credit of Great Britain. It is our interest to do so, even to the extent of contributing in aid of the National Debt according to our means, in case such contribution could be necessary. If the National Debt of Britain were effaced by a Bankruptcy, a very great number of the persons who consume our articles of fabric and export, would be reduced to penury, a stagnation of trade must ensue, and goods be thrown back upon the hands of the manufacturers. Follow this calamity of a failure of demand through all its ramifications; a general depression of industry from the cessation of encouragement; every consumption diminished, the produce of land comes to be less in requisition; land and house-rents fall; and all the elegant arts decline which thrive in luxurious life, and are ripened by the overflow of opulence. Take the matter in another point  
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of view. The credit of Britain gives efficacy to her resources ; it covers the ocean with her fleets ; it is the lever by which she moves mankind ; one of the pedestals of that Colossus which bestrides the world !—What would become of this Island, unprotected and unprepared for the event, if the artificial power of Britain were subverted ? We should certainly neither have security for what we now possess, nor receive encouragement to improve it. If France continued omnipotent, we should be her slave. If her present frantic vigour were exhausted, to be the subject of contest on our own soil among the European powers, or their factions, would be our mildest destiny. I have not rested, because the reader can easily supply the deficiency, on the intermediate pillage of the holders of every sort of property. Of these obligations to support Great Britain, arising from private interest, the former applies, in some degree, to every nation whose commerce feels the invigorating influence of British speculation ; the latter is appropriate to Ireland.

But that a necessity should arise for repairing a breach in the credit of Great Britain, is a mere fiction of the imagination, introduced to demonstrate, by an example, the degree of ardour which should animate our attachment to the sister nation. I am aware that her former treatment of  
Ireland



Ireland was culpable, but the conduct of Ireland to herself was yet more so. I am no friend to posthumous resentments. It is more becoming the dignity of a wise people to throw our passions into the shade, and cultivate our interests. What intercourse can be so beneficial to Ireland as with a rich country, stretched by it, within a few hours sail, possessing the most extensive commercial connexions in the world; a sure and steady mart, and a quick return; mistress of a powerful navy, which is equally engaged to protect our trade and our repose, and enjoying the habitual respect of the world, in which we participate?

That Britain was vulnerable on the side of her public credit and resources, and that they were marked by destiny to direct the blow which should lay prostrate that immense power, was among the delusions of that credulous and deservedly-unfortunate party, who, disguising their ambition, very probably to themselves, under the name of patriotism, endeavoured, by an apostate connexion with France, to seize the Government of Ireland. The finances of Britain cannot fail whilst they are managed with ability. Though the nominal debt is immense, the capital is irredeemable; and the perpetual annuities, which constitute in truth the charge, are paid to residents in the country.

country. It is the right hand settling accounts with the left; whilst such is the case, the course of circulation may be diversified, but the property of the nation cannot be overwhelmed. The improvement of the steam-engine, the various modern discoveries in chemistry, the application of these discoveries to manufacture, the abridgment of labour by introducing machines, have performed what is perhaps better than paying off the debt of the American war; they have created funds which are equivalent to the imposition. Ingenuity and enterprize will in like manner reduce the burden of the present loans to a feather weight. Perhaps inquisitive research is at this very instant employed in exploring or in opening the markets, by the supply of which this momentous operation is to be effected. From France herself we shall draw back, as we have done from America, a part of the expence of the contest we maintain against her; for she has sacrificed her manufactures to the War and Revolution. At the return of Peace she will have wants which can be most satisfactorily provided for by the English merchants, and she will disgorge the plunder of the Continent into their counting-houses.

I must not dissemble that these sentiments originate in great partiality to the sister nation. But



it is a partiality founded on a sense of her virtues; on the importance of the functions she performs towards human nature; on the character and glory of the people, and on the essential utility, which I apprehend accrues to this, my more immediate country, from her situation as a part of that respectable Empire. If I could flatter myself with the expectation, that any degree of public attention may be bestowed upon opinions so humbly presented by the mediocrity of station and ability, I should tender them as evidence of this fact, that the education and habits of an Irish Catholic do not indispose him to the glory of the British Empire. The contrary has been asserted often, and by persons of no small authority. Some years back, the Dublin Journal, a publication in many instances of great improvidence and indecorum, but for a long time a peculiar object of our Government's care and patronage, speaking of the loyalty of that part of the King's subjects, used these remarkable expressions:—"it exactly resembles the loyalty of a chained tyger to his keeper!!"

How many controversies have been moved on the reciprocal obligations of Great Britain and Ireland as fraternal states; in any of which, if the Parliament had been so constituted as to have followed its own minority into the popular notions  
of

of the day, there was an end to the unity of the Empire. If the two nations incline variously on public questions, they can only be employed in watching each other. And will any man of ordinary observation say, that he can count on the temper and forbearance of their respective people, to correct these disorders in the constitution? No; but Parliament can be induced, as hitherto has been the case, to preserve the harmony of the federal connexion. Why resort to circuitous means and complex machinery for an effect which may be produced simply and directly, and by the sacrifice of a very secondary object? I am sure the Irish Parliament has done well in preserving, on many questions, a coincidence with the Minister. It is needless to scrutinize the motives which actuate men, when their conduct produces beneficial consequences. Few take the trouble to weigh the widely mischievous inconvenience of bickerings and broils between the Sovereign and the States, or between the representative bodies of two nations whose concerns cross each other every day, and whose views and interests must be intimately combined, or irreconcilably discordant. How invidious the task we impose upon our Parliament, by majorities, under the suspicion of influence, to thwart the opinions which their own discontented minority disseminates through the people! It has been tauntingly said, on innumerable

nable occasions, that our Independent Government takes orders from a power we do not recognize, and carries them to our Independent Parliament, by which they are ratified! That such mock Independence affords no reasonable occasion for vanity. I have already touched upon this subject. To reject a permanent settlement on the ground of vanity, resembles the simplicity of a poor man preferring gaudy tatters to the comforts of industry.—I cannot see the wisdom of postponing the useful, to the ornamental parts of civil liberty.

But how, it may be said, are we to be enriched? Britain has no new commercial advantages to impart. What commercial laws, and concessions can atchieve, is already pretty well accomplished. What are laws, and opportunities, without a capital? They are but as beautiful machinery to a mill without a water-course. The improvement of agriculture, and the increase of the linen trade, and more than either, the so-much-reprobated repeal of the penalties against adhering to the Catholic Religion, have added much to the wealth of Ireland. But more must  
be

be done to meet the exigencies of our population. Where the linen manufacture has not taken root, the people, at a certain distance from the coast, are wretched. They cannot recur to any other employment than the manufacture of land, so that the landholder has a double monopoly against them: he can command his own price for the ground he lets, and he can fix what value suits him on the labour he purchases. The general introduction of manufactures must open new markets for labour, and raise the price of it by a steady, and not a violent operation, before we can expect, to see the condition of our Poor materially ameliorated.

I did once imagine that the causes I have here enumerated, proceeding slowly, though regularly, would have been adequate to the remedy of our disorders. But experience, and the observation of what daily passes, have convinced me that this sanguine hope is vain, until a great change of manners shall have taken place; and this only is to be effected by a great change of Constitution. Contests for power in the upper circles would be innocent, if to them they were confined;  
but



but acting on the tenacity of the Protestants, and the expectations of the Catholics, they carry bitterness to every fire-side in Ireland. You must root out these feuds if you would banish wretchedness from the land ; you must exclude them ; not by elevating the pride of these, or reducing those to sullen acquiescence, but by compleatly removing the cause, by placing our concerns under the care of a superior power, impartial by situation, and by the absence of the local passions and prejudices that distract us. The People of Ireland will then have an undivided interest. Foreign Capital may be induced to visit us ; the property of natives will stagnate in the country, and be formed into masses sufficient to give employment to our people. It is from hence I expect the augmentation of our trade, the increase of export and of home consumption. When the alarms of people of property are at rest, and a perfect confidence created in the settlement of the country, they will not hesitate to assist industrious or speculating men by advancing money or credit to them. I have in my view the great number of small banks, and liberal discount-offices, which are to be met in every part of England and Scotland.



Two other circumstances disposed me to consider favourably the project of an Union with Great Britain. Examining, not long since, in a course of amusing study, the treaty of the year 1785, generally called the Commercial Propositions, I observed it to be a well-intended and beneficial system, but defective in some respects. There was not a jurisdiction superior to both contracting parties, to enforce the rules, and decide upon the breach and the performance of the agreement. In consequence of this chasm, all the wise purposes of the adjustment were very likely to be rendered abortive. My other cause of conviction was the very great resemblance, which, previous to the Union, Scotland bore to the actual state of Ireland. Scotland had a popular and a fashionable religion, actuated against each other by a degree of rancour infinitely more inveterate and unmitigated than the sectarian animosities of Ireland. The Government was jealous of the people, and the people of the Government. She had too her parliamentary factions, who as well as their co-adjutors at Westminster, assiduously fomented the discontents of a people, without exception the most turbulent in the world. I do not count so much upon the West-India or Plantation trade to the single port of Glasgow, when I talk of the means, by which  
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the Scotch grew to be rich, orderly and contented. No,—internal quiet was the mine to which they owe their wealth; it was to the establishment of private credit and confidence on the basis of tranquillity; it was to the formation of a Government, which had no feeling of subaltern resentment, of habitual or hereditary prejudice. But here let me mark the error of the Scotch Union, as a lesson and a warning to the legislatures of both countries, to examine narrowly into the circumstances of Ireland, and leave no grievance unredressed, when the adjustment is completed. If the people of Scotland had been emancipated by abolishing the heritable jurisdictions, the Rebellions of 1715, and 1745, would as to that country have been, most probably, prevented.

Must the settlement of Ireland by domestic means be then given up as an hopeless enterprize? Such I apprehend to be the fact, although I have not always entertained that sentiment. And as I do not aspire to seek the favour of any party, more especially that of which upon every principle I disapprove, I shall lay down, precisely as they occur, the grounds of my opinion.—I begin with the general diffusion through the country of what are called Orange Lodges, and the temper  
which

which appears to actuate these societies. They claim the credit of having assembled for the protection of a tottering throne. Let them take the full merit of their loyalty. But the spirit of revenge which, under their auspices, has so often lingered after victory, and the dominion over their fellow subjects, which they seem to claim as their reward, reduce very considerably the value of their services.

These clubs, are instituted to suit protestants of every age, and education and degree. Filiations of them have been formed in most country towns, in the University, in many regiments, and even among school-boys, so that if they are of doubtful portent to the harmony of society, the evil is not like to be of limited extent or short duration. The drawing-room and even the nursery bear their emblems. It is not a benevolent association, calculated to extend or to preserve, or to improve the system of pure religion, by which they consider themselves enlightened. The first object of the confederacy is to maintain, and the next to celebrate the political supremacy of one part of the King's subjects over another.—They commemorate not

Thy great name, Nassau,

Who stamp'd the bless'd deed of Liberty and Law—

not the purifier of the monarchy and the founder

of civil freedom, but a sort of spurious William of their own creation, resembling John Wesley, or any other fanatic founder of a sect, without a trait of character, by which, if he repassed on earth, the sage and hero would recognise himself as fairly represented.

Far be it from me to suppose that many very honourable persons may not have been induced to enrol themselves under this symbol of dissension. We have passed through a very trying season to men's feelings. There is not any situation in which one is so likely to be led astray, as when he fixes his eyes upon one side only of a political object; and that passions, terror, and resentment, screen from his view the consequences by which his first conception might be corrected. But let me tell them, that they are under an error when they hope to manage the monster whom they nourish. Those who are now among the most submissive of their party will become its leaders, if it shall take root; and its excesses, the men I here address, will in vain attempt to moderate. Lord George Gordon had never the fire of London in his contemplation. With all their faults, the persons, who projected this late wanton insurrection,



tion, had no participation of guilt with the ferocious mobs of Wexford and of Mayo.

Another circumstance contributes to the delusion of the Gentlemen I have been describing. They do not feel the importance of the Catholics to this country.—I do not speak of them as an opulent order in the state—rich men “may flourish and may fade,” but as they supply almost entirely the labouring and industrious classes of the community. If I treated of an Indian territory, I would say, let the mind of the Gentoo be free from every restraint, except the wholesome horror of iniquity. Public prosperity proceeds from the base to the summit of the cone. The foundation must be large and firm to support a durable superstructure. The Government, in combination with a part of the people, may, so far as physical force confers authority, impose restrictions on the Catholics; but Ireland will pine over the dungeon of her children. Without debasing itself into a standing jest to this reflecting Empire and age, by appearing to punish men for their Religion, a system of manners may be introduced, which shall reduce, to an unoperative theory, all the advantages which the Constitution supposes them to enjoy, and which a wise Prince

has



has studied to procure for them. Now precisely to this point does the invidious confederacy, called Orange-men, tend. Let us put by the consideration, that people of every character and temper may procure admission to the Society, and that the worst propensities of bad minds are not like to be restrained when there is a prospect of protection: If this business continues, it must lead to outrages on persons and property, and there will be no lack of justificatory pretences.\* I put also out of view this fact, which in this age and country bears evidence, unfortunately too strong of authenticity, that political associations, on any extensive scale, are in an extreme degree dangerous to any Government.

The spirit of the institution is to inculcate an opinion that its votaries form a superior order in the state, with superior title to every kind of consideration and privilege. As a leading principle, it asserts that certain immunities of our Constitution have been improvidently granted to the Catholics,

\* What numbers, during the late disturbances, would not believe the evidence of their senses, that every Papist was not a rebel! How many were sadly chagrined at the propriety with which the persons of property of the Romish communion acted!

tholics, and that similar concessions are in future to be resisted. Can any scheme be devised more effectually calculated to excite antipathies and disgust among the inhabitants of the same country, and render them adverse to each other, in sentiment, as pole from pole? And can that divided country prosper? Can it be denominated Independent? Can human happiness be brought to perfection? What retribution for these evils is a titular independence in which a few men have an interest? Not a man in Ireland feels more ardently for the liberty of my country; but I call for practical Independence, which shall be felt in every sinew through the land. I am adverse to the system under which

—— a factious band agree

To call it Freedom, if themselves be free.

I protest against a scheme thus fanciful and oppressive.

Let me conclude the detail of evils by calmly laying before these Societies, the perverse temper, the barbarism, let me call it, which they necessarily must induce, and necessarily perpetuate. Men in easy circumstances may turn aside for consolation, from an object that disgusts them. Among persons of the higher class, the arrogant pretensions of a rival party may only occasion an irritation.

tion. But, even so, they must assuredly become more indifferent to the public welfare, and more inactive in the improvement of their country. In humble life men are chained to the oar by their situation; there indeed will qualities be found too fit to produce mischief, and materials too easy to be worked on. Little minds are prone enough to assume authority where they can, and to practise an overbearing insolence of demeanor. The Protestant Mechanic, who has studied manners and politics in an Orange Lodge, and has there been taught his measure of forbearance, will be spoiled with regard to his own duties, and he will equally spoil his neighbour, a man of more feeling than reflection, whom he teazes and bullies, and drives either into seditious turbulence, or enervated despondency. I am persuaded a state has no better resource than in the well-regulated firmness of its People.—I borrow this sentiment, which, on former occasions, actuated me in some feeble efforts to serve the country through the Catholics, from Dr. Adam Smith, an excellent judge of the springs by which men are moved. He attributes the prosperity of England to the temper of the Yeomanry; and this character he thinks is formed in a good measure by their election privileges. It is apparent, that I consider the

Union

Union rather eligible by the system of police to which it leads, than on any other consideration. Here let me add one word, called for by the construction I put on a pamphlet, published, it would seem by authority, in order to break the ground for this discussion. Unless the Servants of the Crown mean, among other internal regulations, to include a settlement under the head of religious difference, completely co-extensive with the grievance, then will an incorporation of the Legislatures be found a measure bad for Ireland, but, if possible, worse for Britain.—The penalties against Catholics ought to be repealed, if it were only to discountenance the Orange faction, by shewing the error and impotence of the Association. The measure would be popular and acceptable. I assert this fact in contradiction to the State Prisoners, who averred, in their examination before the Committee of Parliament, that emancipation, as it has been called, was slighted, except as a pretence. So perhaps it was among the Catholics with whom they mixed, or those on whom they practised; the latter, an ignorant peasantry; the former, a cabal of ill-intentioned Democrats, who dreaded not any thing so much, as lest the King's Government should disarm the public discontent by



by a concession so highly grateful. There is, and always has been, a body of Catholics, numerous, respectable, and of steady loyalty, to whose minds there is no nearer object.

I am aware that I brave the censure of many respectable persons whose sentiments are cast in a different mould, and whose passions are exasperated by recent resentment. What! a lenient rule of policy for ungrateful men, whose rebellion has produced so much public and private calamity! Exactly so. If every Catholic in Ireland had been a rebel, it ought to make no difference. There is an immutable rule of right and wrong, politic and inexpedient, by which the merits of the question are to be tried and decided. And again: if even such were the case, the moment of victory would be the critical time to make the concession; what might have been in the last year injudicious, as liable to be represented a pusillanimous compromise, might at this day be compliment and heroic sacrifice. The whole continent of America was in open hostility at the time that liberal terms of accommodation were proposed. Here I am at issue with the Orange-men. They propose to encrease the weight of the criminal law by a  
corrective



corrective discipline, regulated by each private man's sense of propriety. I assert that a strong Government ought for some time to be maintained, and the laws to be enforced with rigid impartiality. But no other awe, no fetters on the mind, no subjection. Am I told that it is not intended thus to debase the public mind of Ireland? To be sure these designs are not in familiar contemplation; I think better of my species. But let me tell these Societies, that if one man in fifty expects to mend his fortune by dabbling in the system of espionage, which has so long vexed this country, that man is of more efficacy to do ill, than ever so many well meaning, inactive men, are to counteract him. And let me tell them, that the tendency of their institution to produce the effect I have described, according to the habitual tenor of human proceedings, is not more regular than that of a sphere to drop to the ground by the laws of gravitation.

I am discoursing of lenity and mercy. What has the repeal of the disqualifications against Catholics to do with the Rebellion?—In certain counties there was a rising of the peasantry; provoked, cajoled, seduced by certain gentlemen,

Deists, some of Catholic, more of Protestant education. The insurgents were Catholics, just as any man, who offends the laws against property, is, within the same limits, a Catholic, because it happens to be the popular religion of those districts. They were combated by Catholic militia regiments; by Catholic noblemen, gentlemen and farmers; that is, by all those who had kept themselves aloof, not from the religious, but the political illusion. Indeed I believe the principal person in point of dignity of the Catholic party did exert himself with more gallantry, than any other of his rank, not professedly a military or militia officer. When the clown had proceeded a little way under his doctors and generals of the rights of man, he bethought himself of his early reverential impressions; and having out of about two thousand five hundred Catholic Priests, who are in Ireland, collected five and twenty in the different rebellions, mingled together superstition and rapine, and murder and liberty in a manner, which I want words to stigmatise, which I am appalled to contemplate; as to ferocity, very similar to all other mobs; and, as to superstition, most like what Mr. Bruce relates of Abyssinia. Now, which is it better to reclaim those people, or to confirm their  
disorderly

disorderly habits? They have proved themselves to be in that state of society, where observances have more influence upon the mind, than moral principle. A state, which no system of religion that was ever known on earth, is calculated to produce among its votaries. It is clearly indicative of something vilified and stupid in the mind, not from nature surely, but superinduced by extrinsic circumstances. It is the result of a certain course of manners, whilst these continue, it will prevail. But whenever by teaching a man to set a higher value on himself, you give a greater expansion to his faculties, he will be formed to a more enlightened mind, and will acquire a superior tone of vigorous understanding.

Somewhat previous to this insurrection, the Orange Society was transplanted from its original nursery in the county of Armagh; and, being applied to parts of the country, where even upon its own pretexes of justification it was not necessary, did favour in no small degree the intrigues of the incendiaries in the French interest. The ignorant people saw a mysterious association, of which they were in some respects the object, but they could not divine to what intent. I know that this circumstance,



stance, and the terrors, which from thence were artfully deduced, did in many instances drive the common people to seek for arms. The Irish peasantry have been, from various predisposing causes, at all times but too prone to riot; and when this first step had been gained, it was no hard task to lead them forward. Why should Democracy, solely a political monster, be opposed by reviving religious prejudices, which never existed to any beneficial purposes. There were holds of full as much efficacy and more capable of extensive application. The truth is, that whether from perverseness, or blindness, or the horror of all kinds of innovation, or the occasional appearance of some persons on the scene in both dramas, there has been a strange confusion of a just with a base pursuit, of men who sought to improve their condition under the state, and of men who desired to subvert it. I will exactly lay down the difference.

The Gallic Reformer invited you to change for change sake; the Catholic pointed to an inconvenience in your laws, and he shewed you how he would himself derive benefit from the alteration. The objects of the former were indefinite, and the consequences incalculable; but in a single glance you could hold under your eye



eye the beginning and end, and all the implications of what was sought by the Catholic.—You tell him, I think the Church Establishment is connected with the peace and property of the country. I wish to secure it, in its actual course of succession. He replies, that the disqualification, of which he complains, affords no additional security to the Church; that its pillars are the connexion with Britain, and the balance of property. That he does not desire the aggrandizement of his fellow-religionists, as a body; but that there should be no obstacle in the way, of any individual of that communion, to push, to the utmost extent of which they are capable, the advantages of birth and fortune, talents and industry. These are the distinctions which grow necessarily out of the social institutions; but we in this country add a new distinction, Religion; and, as it is unnatural, so does it appear to me to be impolitic; and, as it is of very universal operation, I do think it distorts and vitiates the entire system. Without any leaning to the doctrines of the Church established, there is not in the land a more true friend than the writer of this essay, to the principle of supporting the dignity and possessions of its Clergy. My reasons are solely political. I think, in a better state of things than we have

witnessed

witnessed for some time, that reformed episcopacy might hold the balance between the other great religious bodies. The popular Religions ought to be provided with every liberty and decent accommodation for worship, and with the means of rendering their Pastors respectable. But an opulent establishment could not suit them. To divide the wealth of the Church, from the wealth of the State, would only give occasion to new broils, and produce an order of things, in my opinion, unjust, but surely unnatural. Here is the scope and course of my attachment. So far as my observation extends, the reflecting Catholics of this country never entertained a wish to give an establishment to their Clergy. Shall we be told that, as they were uneasy under the civil disqualifications, so if all differences between them and the State were reduced to the ecclesiastical establishment, that would furnish an occasion of repining. I answer, that such is by no means the necessary consequence. The civil disqualifications are of a nature to cross a man every day in his interest, and in his passions. The Religious establishment affects the one not at all, and the other very slightly. People meet, or think they meet, the affected superiority of a neighbour in daily superciliousness of look and gesture, and in all the ordinary offices of intercourse.—The penalties yet  
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in force against the Catholics must by some persons be unpleasantly or severely felt; but yet it would, compared with the number whom they affect, be idle to treat of them, at this day, as of a very oppressive burden. They are the watchword for a party. They minister to a vanity that ought not to exist. They feed unjustifiable pretensions. They confuse the duties of the subject, and distract him in the performance of them. They tend to ulcerate \* the minds of the people.—“ My  
 “ Clergyman is better endowed than yours,” is an assertion not calculated to create so much controversy and pique, as this other—“ by the law  
 “ of the land I am your superior!” It is moreover not the temper in which a demand is made, but the justness of the proposal, that ought to influence

\* I must advert to the temper of a Poem called the Orange; a printed collection of Orange songs; and, until very lately, to the tenor of the newspapers in that interest, to shew that if the Catholics were willing to be at ease, they would not be permitted. I copy this stanza from one of them; it appeared since the rebellion was suppressed. Describing the overthrow of the rebels—

See their Clergy march before them,  
 With their sacred vestments o'er them;  
 Sprinkling them with holy water,  
 And calling on to blood and slaughter.

It is not every man, who despises those ridiculous revilings, that will not be roused by them.



fluence the judgment of a law-giver. If the people are unreasonable, be they never so clamorous, he ought to rise in his vigour and repress them.

How easily might all these matters be arranged, if the Catholics would only be submissive, and accept the protection which these Clubists hold out to their loyalty, only now and then seasoned by a little sharpness of observation; that is, in more familiar language, “let matters remain as they are.” In the name of all those feelings which are irritated and inflamed at the prospect of diminishing your hopes of Parliamentary importance, are men, constituted like yourselves, to behold every day the travellers passing and repassing, from humble situations to eminent honours in the State, and do you expect they shall never long to join you in the journey? *This world was made for Cesar.* O admirable adepts in the science of the human heart! O benevolent and considerate Fellow-Citizens! In what respect does the Constitution of a Catholic differ from your own, that he should shrink in awe before the silly emblem of your faction, or tremble at the polluted name of the great William?

Forbearances of that nature are, I conceive, not to be expected; and, least of all, under the circumstances to which I have so often pointed. Rich men will pine after the compliments which  
generally



generally await on wealth. You cannot contract their means of prospering, without ruining the resources of the State; and that, give me leave to prophecy, the supreme Government, for its own interest, will not consent to. Aspiring young men at the Bar will perceive that the passage into the House of Commons is not very difficult, and that, in a course of Parliamentary exertions, a man may rise high without very extraordinary endowments. It does not stand to reason that these claims can be at rest, whilst the inducement to urge them is so very near; and though they may happen to be dormant, that is no evidence that they are forgotten. I do not presume to deliver the sentiments of any description of my fellow-subjects.—On this very question of an Union there must be ten thousand different opinions among the Catholics, and nothing more unwise than to think of reconciling them. The landowner, the merchant, the professional man, the manufacturer, the inhabitant of Cork and of Dublin, will have separate views, and the peasant will be indifferent to them all: The builder in Dublin, and the dairy-man contiguous to the port of Waterford, who pay the same rent, one for a few feet of ground, and the other for a mountain, will make up their minds upon very contradictory foundation. I answer for other persons, if the compa-

rison be not arrogant, as Fielding, answered for mankind, when he drew apposite characters, and faithfully described how men would act under certain influences. It is not advancing a claim to importance, but merely to avoid misapprehension, that I declare, I do not write in political connexion with any person or party. Entertaining the warmest wishes and the best intentions for the service of the Catholics, I have no disposition to flatter, or court, or cultivate them. When they flourished less than at this day, my insignificant labours were freely given to their cause, and not, it was said, without some utility. I contributed my mite to expose their claims, and to draw to them the attention of the Empire, certainly without detracting from their reputation on the side of attachment to the Constitution, or its duties. I owed to them, in return, the enjoyment for some time of a very grateful partiality. But as that partiality must have been either rashly bestowed, or withdrawn with levity, the rapid transition left my mind in a state of apathy, as to any similar event in future. I plead in my own right. I should never have submitted to the toil of delivering these ideas on the present topic, but that I conceived,  
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from the Government publication\* on that subject, that notions prevailed, where it is most important that they should not, founded in inaccurate policy; and that, unless they were re-considered, whether the Union take place or not, we could only expect a patch-work settlement. I deny the position that the Catholics “demand such an alteration in the Parliamentary Constitution, as will give their numbers proportionate power.”—(page 20) No such thing. That would be, to demand a Democracy, with all its inconveniencies. Population would then become superior to property, and the acquisitions of a Catholic would not be more safe than those of any other. But they have demanded, and ought to demand, that, without moving any man from his legal place in our society, the tenure of power should be property, and not party. What could any man propose to himself by asking for a good house, where he knew there must be an earthquake? I again deny that “any new Parliamentary Test Oath should be formed to admit the jurisdiction of the Pope.” The jurisdiction of the Pope is as clearly ascertained as the jurisdiction of the King’s Bench, and would not be let in on temporal points, by omitting the oaths which assert the King’s ecclesiastical supremacy,

\* “Reason for and against an Union.”



macy, and which deny the doctrine of the Eucharist. The supremacy of the Pope is practically little more than reverential; and if they are left to themselves, no persons are more inclined than his Clergy to cavil at, and restrict it.—I am again constrained to controvert the position (page 25), that there would be indecorum or inconsistency in “ admitting the Catholics to seats in the Legislature, and retaining the present Parliamentary Constitution.” I think more Catholics might gain admittance to Parliament, under the Borough system, than if the basis of Representation were landed property.

These extracts, and many like passages in the same publication, according to my apprehension, are erroneous in point of fact, inaccurate in policy, calculated to create in the Catholics disgust, and further misapprehension in the Protestants. Yet it is a work in several other respects of good sense and judgment. It proves in what manner the Catholic question has been understood amongst men of situation in the country, who have few opportunities of collecting the sentiments of that people from intercourse. It proves to the Catholics how much they have suffered by the giddy politics, that have prevailed amongst many in the metropolis, in consequence of which their cause  
became



became the footstool of Democracy; the cant of men who had no serious wish upon the subject. It was huddled up and brought before the public amidst a throng of impertinencies and indiscretions, intemperance and innovations. It cannot then be a matter of surprise that its nature and consequences were misapprehended, and that opponents to it arose among some of the soundest heads in Ireland. When men were confused in the pursuit of their own interests, it was less extraordinary that the nature and extent of the demand should not be comprehended by others, less accustomed to consider them. But the disposition to Jacobinism which prevailed in Dublin, (where I deny that it was any thing like universal) and in some other places, according as the influence of the Dublin party extended to them, is to be ascribed, in the first instance to be sure, to the intrigues of the French Union, and the vehemently seditious speeches and publications, which were sent among the people; but no small part of it was owing to resentment and disgust at the assiduous illiberality of the Corporation of this City, and to another cause not much noticed. Every body knows the importance of newspapers in forming the mind of that numerous class in this country, who have not leisure or reading habits beyond the

the daily occurrences, and the remarks that accompany them. Whilst the prints, in the party of Government, inculcated order and the social duties, they treated the Catholics with malignity. They were of course excluded from the houses of the people thus offended, and the vacant ground was occupied by others, holding a language in all things directly contrary.

The train of evils I have laid down are not within the competence of the Irish Government to rectify. There are extravagant accumulations of the sovereign power in the hands of a few men, which lead also to extensive influence out of Parliament, and the Government cannot be carried on without the concurrence of these persons.—It must then be subject to their passions and caprices, and to those of their adherents, and neither may be liberal and enlightened. Some of them may even protect, or indirectly patronise the abuses we complain of. The reply is, reform the parliament. Whatever attention I am capable of giving to any subject, I have bestowed on the various proposals, which have been offered to remedy the obvious defects and inconveniencies in the constitution of our House of Commons, I have found no scheme offered which did not directly lead to one of these two practical consequences, either to render more inveterate,

veterate, the evil of power accumulated in few hands, without a Sovereign's interest in the public welfare, and at the same time to confer a tenure more secure and more independent of the people ; or on the other hand to endanger the stability of the throne ; and of property, which seldom has survived the evil destiny of its mate ; to banish commerce by disquiet ; and conduct the nation through the ways of turbulence to anarchy.

To a disorderly system, resembling in several particulars, if it were permitted to take effect, the administration of Egypt by Pacha, Beys, and Mamelukes, the king's advisers can have no predilection. It is calculated in many instances to thwart the royal authority. For although the people have no great benefit from extra-parliamentary opposition, such a thing seems to exist, to what extent men remote from power cannot determine. To risk an appeal to the people at large would in these, or almost in any times, be, on the part of Government, an hazardous experiment. But how is the Government itself affected ? Whilst the adherence of Ireland to the Empire is, in any respect, precarious ; whilst it does not stand upon the strongest legal security ; whilst the mettle of Ireland is liable to be stirred up to a division by frequent and familiar debate, and high-sounding appellations,



appellations, so long will the supreme Government and its Minister, the dependant Government, be jealous of this people. It will be apprehensive of every party, and of the combination of any. We all know how prone, we little mortals are, to fall upon each other, on one pretence or other. The temper and the occasion will be improved, and dissensions connived at, if not fomented, by persons combining the will, with the situation, to act effectively for that purpose. The Government will not suffer any of the parties to be crushed, but will preserve the equilibrium by occasionally shifting its weight into the balance with the weaker. The Catholics, as more exposed to the abuse of power, as being more generally dependant and standing more in need of protection and of quiet, seem likely to be the greatest sufferers in this horse-play of politicians. It is very far from my thought in this statement to treat with disrespect any individual, or any order whatsoever; but such is the manner in which a perverse interest is likely to affect the actions of very honourable persons.

This is perhaps, we shall be told, an argument for a separation. So it would be, but that a separation would be a still greater evil. An enterprize of separation, successful or otherwise, would just  
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lay the country down, where it was left by Cromwell; and very probably without the same opportunities to retrieve from the disaster.

What security have we then of better treatment and a kinder policy after an Union? The very best which the nature of the thing admits of, and that is the best possible, the urgent interest of the Imperial Government. Since the loss of her American dominions, the British Cabinet seems to have felt the necessity of bringing forward all the energies of its remaining territory. Britain, as compared to France, is an artificial power which can only maintain, by the resources of the State founded on the diffused prosperity and opulence of its subjects, the commanding attitude from which it cannot recede without destruction. The wedge must be strong, firm, solid and compact, by which any impression can be made on the extended front of France, or the edge turned of her modern enthusiasm. This is our shield against the possible injustice or partiality of men, who, on the Union establishment, shall be called to administer power in this island. Britain at present dreads to interfere, lest it might turn out that she was acting against her very valuable interests. So soon as that apprehension ceases, the Ministers of the Crown will be under an irresistible necessity to satisfy the People, and bring forward all the capabilities

capabilities of this kingdom. They are at this day so fully sensible that the State only exists by the accommodation of its subjects, that every neglected acre of ground in Great Britain is assiduously investigated and put to culture. And will they abandon this fair land to be the sport, and prey, and waste of silly factions? These factions have had a permissive existence, and when the purpose shall cease for which they were wanted, they will be suffered to decline into contemptuous oblivion.

For these reasons I cheerfully embrace the principle of a legislative Union with Great Britain. I do not think any thing better can be done for the country. In the existing circumstances of this part of the Globe, and in any circumstance which probable conjecture presents as likely to arise, I do not see that Ireland can attain a prominent rank in the affairs of Europe. If my country cannot be great, I wish to see her comfortable. But in our politico-religious arrangement, although we ought to consult the lights, we should not be bound by the example of Great Britain. In that respect the analogy fails between the Countries.

THE END.



